

Middletown Open Space & Fields Committee

Minutes of Meeting

January 8, 2011

A meeting of the Open Space & Fields Committee took place on Saturday, January 8, 2011 at 10 am at Linden Park, continuing at Kempenaar Valley.

Members Present: Anne Baptista, Dick Barker, Mason Hawes, Maryalice Huggins, John Pinto and Ralph Thomas

Members Absent: Cheryl Boergesson, Nicholas Coogan, Denise D'Amico and Steve Ponte

Ex-officio Members:

Present: Bruce Long, Town Council Liaison; Dick Adams, Planning Board

Absent: Robert Johnson, Conservation Commission

Also Present: Tim Shaw, Recreation Director, Town of Middletown

Others Present (at Linden Park only):

Donna Bonnenfont, Allen & Barbara Gifford, Jenny Johnson, Paige Kaine, Pete Marnane, Frank Martin and Sue Pashko

The purpose of the Linden Park portion of the meeting was to familiarize committee members with the park and to receive comments with regard to the park's condition and any suggestions for changes to the current park plan from neighboring residents and others interested in the park.

In general, neighboring residents were pleased with the parks condition. They specifically indicated that maintenance of the park in 2010 was very good; better than it had been in previous years.

One consistent comment of the neighboring residents was, that while the playground equipment provided activities for younger children, there was nothing available for older children. One suggestion was the installation of basketball goals. If that were to be done, they asked that it be placed toward the front of the park in the vicinity of the IHOP to avoid noise problems with the residences to the east and north.

Other potential uses of the park include dedication of a portion as a community garden and establishing a bicycle training area on the asphalted area toward the rear (east side) of the park.

Park Concerns Noted

- Access to the park from the east is a potential problem. Middletown had an access easement when Linden School was being used. When the site ceased to be used for a school, the easement, by its terms, was terminated. Although the property owners are continuing to allow access through the area covered by the easement, they are not obligated to do so and could bar access if they so chose. Additionally, the area covered by the former easement is not being**

maintained as it was when the school was there.

- **Another concern was that the portable toilet that had been in the park had become a nuisance and was frequently being tipped over. Among the residents present at the meeting, there was general agreement that they preferred not to have a portable toilet, but that if one was placed in the park it needed to be chained to something to keep it from being tipped over.**

- **The front (west side) of the park faces West Main Road. The front area of the park is used for lacrosse and soccer. There is concern that a ball could enter the street and that a child could chase it into the traffic. Installation of a fence would prevent that.**

- **That, because of the presence of several springs, an area on the east side of the park was often wet. A metal grate over a drain often clogs and needs to be cleaned periodically. This is often carried out by neighboring residents.**

- **A short standpipe on the north side of the park was a potential trip hazard to running children. Neighbors inquired as to whether it was possible to cover it in some manner.**

- **The stone wall facing West Main Road is in need of repair.**

The committee would like to thank Tim Shaw for overseeing the

mailing of over 200 notices of the meeting to those residing in proximity to the park.

Following the Linden Park site visit, the committee continued to the Kempenaar Valley to familiarize committee members with the property generally, and specifically with the area which is being considered for the construction of a building to house a winter's farmers park.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the committee will be at 5 pm, January 19 in the Community Room of the Middletown Police Station.

Ralph Thomas

Recording Secretary